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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002898

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

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SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY
12 SITREP

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06/GAZA STRIP RECCE - 11 JULY 2006

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶11. (C) IDF forces reportedly moved through the central section of Gaza on July 12, dividing the Gaza Strip in two. An IDF airstrike on a house near Gaza City killed seven Palestinians and wounded several others, possibly including Hamas military wing leader Mohammed Deif. Initial reports regarding the mission of two PLO envoys in Damascus indicate little progress in their efforts to end the crisis. Post has a list of 128 American citizens requesting assistance in leaving Gaza and is working to determine a date for their departure. Crossings remain closed, other than the Nahal Oz fuel transfer point and Karni, which opened at 3:30 pm on July 12. 15 truckloads of goods, including shipments for the ICRC and WFP, were apparently able to cross via Erez on July ¶11. Khan Younis is reported to have power for eight hours per day and Gaza City for six hours per day.

Military Developments

¶12. (C) A combined IDF force of infantry, armor, and engineering personnel moved west from the Kissufim checkpoint to the area south of Deir Balah on July 12, effectively dividing the Gaza strip in two. The size of the IDF force and how long it will be in position are as yet unclear

¶13. (SBU) IAF aircraft on July 12 struck a house in Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City, killing seven Palestinians and possibly wounding Hamas military wing head Mohammed Deif. The IDF continued airstrikes in other sections of Gaza, killing and wounding a number of Palestinians.

¶14. (SBU) A total of six Qassam rocket launches were reported: two toward Ashkelon and four toward the western Negev. No injuries or damage was reported. In the West Bank, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed to have fired a rocket at the settlement of Ali Zahav, in the northern West Bank. The IDF has not confirmed the attack. IDF raids continued in the West Bank.

Political Developments

¶ 15. (C) President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), speaking during a trip to Amman in which he met with King Abdullah and Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakhit, charged the IDF with "targeting civilians and worsening Palestinian hardship." A large number of long-time Fatah figures - including Central Committee Member Hani al-Hasan, former PR Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala'a), and former foreign minister and UN representative Nasser al-Kidwa - met on July 12 in the President's office to express their support for Abu Mazen and to come up with recommendations to deal with the current crisis.

¶ 16. (C) PLO Envoys Tayser Khaled and Abdullah Hourani, continuing their mission in Damascus, reportedly met with deputy Hamas political bureau chief Mousa Abu Marzouk, DFLP leader Nayef Hawatmeh, PFLP GC leader Ahmad Jibril, and representatives of the Syrian Ba'ath party on July 11. Fatah sources told political specialist that political bureau chief Khaled Mishal refused to meet with them. The two envoys are reportedly seeking to meet with Syrian Vice President Farouq al-Shara. Septel will provide more background on the envoys and their mission.

AMCIT Update

¶ 17. (C) Post now has a list of 128 Americans seeking assistance in leaving Gaza. Post is working on finalizing the list and in arranging a date for another movement of American citizens out of Gaza.

Humanitarian Update

¶ 18. (SBU) Crossings: The Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings

remain closed. The Rafah passenger crossing remains closed. The Karni/al-Mintar commercial crossing, closed since July 6, reportedly opened at 3:30 pm on July 12. USAID staff learned from the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) that 15 trucks of basic commodities were imported through the Erez/Beit Hanoun crossing July 11, including basic food commodities for the World Food Program and two trucks of medical supplies for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Nahal Oz fuel transfer station is operational on July 12. USAID Gaza-based field staff reported the following amounts of fuel were delivered into Gaza July 11:

-- 300,000 liters of diesel;
-- 120 tons of cooking gas.

(Notes: all diesel fuel went to Gaza hospitals; no incoming gasoline was reported.)

¶ 19. (SBU) Electricity: According to USAID Gaza-based field staff, three of the ten medium-tension electricity feeder lines into Gaza are damaged and not currently operational. As a result, Khan Younis only has power for eight hours per day and Gaza City for only six hours per day.

WALLES